

6/22/2006

LEGISLATIVE LINE ITEM VETO ACT OF 2006

**HON. DAVID R. OBEY
OF WISCONSIN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JUNE 22, 2006**

Mr. Speaker, in the end, there are only three essential powers that make the Congress the greatest legislative body in the history of the world. The first is the power to investigate; the second is the power to declare war; and the third is the power of the purse.

This Congress has already supinely given away most of its ability to declare war. It ceded that largely to the President.

This Congress has also engaged in a pitiful amount of oversight and investigation over the past 5 years.

The only remaining power that Congress has is the power of

the purse. If Members of this body want to diminish that power and further weaken the ability of the legislative body to do its job, then, by all means, vote for this underlying bill. If you think it wouldn't be a good idea to do that, then you ought to vote against it.

Can you imagine what a President like LBJ would have done with these powers to

someone like Gaylord Nelson, from my own State, one of the three people who cast a vote against the original appropriation for Vietnam? LBJ would have put his arm around Gaylord's shoulder and he would have said, Gaylord, if you can't see your way through to be with me on the war, you are going to lose an awful lot of things you care about in that budget. I will make your life miserable. I will send down rescissions again and again

and again, on the wilderness,
on you name it.

I believe that the most
pernicious aspect of this
proposal is that it will further gut
the ability of Congress to
review a President's foreign
policy initiatives in an
independent fashion. God
knows we have already failed in
our responsibilities with respect
to keeping us out of the

dumbest war since the War of 1812, in Iraq, and this ill-advised proposition will simply make those matters worse.

